

1890.

(For Private Circulation.)

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## REPORT OF AID

GIVEN TO

# DESTITUTE MOTHERS AND INFANTS.



We testify to the need of this charity, and believe that the money given to it will be faithfully and judiciously expended.

W. L. RICHARDSON, M. D.,  
Physician of Boston Lying-in-Hospital.

CHARLES P. PUTNAM, M. D.,  
Physician of Mass. Infant Asylum.

BERTHA VAN HOOSSEN, M. D.,  
Resident Physician N. E. Hospital for Women and Children.



## REPORT.

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This work was begun in the year 1873.

At that time it was observed that some of the patients who had been admitted to the Maternity Department of the "New England Hospital for Women," were in need of friendly help on leaving the hospital. For though no longer in need of medical aid, they might be as yet unfit for work; and if without money or friends were in need of a temporary shelter, while seeking employment, the care of a young infant adding to the difficulties of the situation.

Some of these patients were married women anxious to support themselves, but disabled for the time by illness or misfortune. Others were young girls, unmarried; in some cases orphans, homeless and friendless.

How to give assistance in the wisest way was a subject of anxious consideration, the problem being to render those we helped self-supporting; the young girls especially being the object of a good deal of thought and care.

We have now had many years experience in this work, and in regard to our objects and methods desire to present the following points:

1st. We work entirely as individuals, feeling it necessary, in order to accomplish our object, to enter into

personal, friendly relations with those whom we assist. This would be harder did we approach them as officials of an institution, bound by rules and limitations. We do not undervalue the work done by societies and institutions; for some objects these are necessary, but our especial work is best done by private individuals. Regarding each woman whom we help, also, as an individual, and not as a member of a class, we are able to adapt our help to her especial needs and peculiar character.

2d. We make it an object to help *mothers*, not *fallen* women, not married women only, but any mother who desires to support her infant, and who can do so with some assistance from us. We thus avoid injuring a young girl, who is comparatively innocent, by branding her as a member of a degraded class.

3d. In every case our object is to enable the mother to support herself and also her child; not to relieve her from the care of it. The danger of pauperizing is not incurred by this sort of help. Often the aid given in money, or some equivalent of money, is trifling and temporary, tiding over a period of only two or three weeks, and yet it may be the means of preserving a respectable, hard-working woman from sinking into a State pauper, or a friendless young girl who has taken one wrong step from being tempted still farther on the downward path.

During the first years of our work we placed many of the infants at board, the mother visiting them often and paying regularly a certain portion of their earnings for the board. After longer experience we found it a much better way to send a mother and infant together into the country, the mother being employed as a domestic, and

the child received with her, in consideration of which she receives lower wages. We have now very few children at board.

It has been suggested that it is a hardship for a woman who has a young child to take care of to be expected to do housework in addition. But many mothers take care of not only one, but several children, and do *all* the work of a house, besides the sewing for the whole family. It does not therefore seem a hardship to *assist* in housework, and take care of *one* child, living with an employer who does a part of her own work and directs the household, often relieving the domestic of the care of the infant on especially busy days. Besides, the situations to which we send our mothers are carefully selected and may be changed if it should seem desirable.

The baby is usually treated as a member of the family, and often becomes the pet of the household. It is therefore a mistake to suppose that one wrong step prevents a young girl from ever regaining a position where she is respected. There are many families where she is kindly received, her services are valued, she has a happy and comfortable home, and what is more important, her child grows up under good influences. Many of the young women whom we have helped have married respectably, and have the advantage of having retrieved their character by an open and truthful life. Another course may be easier, at first, but involves the painful necessity of concealment, and the character is sacrificed to the reputation.

There is no better education for the mother's character than the care of her child. We have watched the

good effects of this in many cases. When the mother first comes to us she may be an ignorant, childish, frivolous young girl, her higher nature dormant, her reason and conscience in so undeveloped a state that they cannot be relied on as a guiding power. But there is one resource. What the undeveloped conscience cannot do for her, her love for her child will accomplish. Let her only keep her infant in her arms and nature will take care of the rest. And if a young girl is persuaded by friends to give her child up for adoption, or if some insuperable difficulty (such as serious illness) prevents her from taking the personal charge, we feel much anxiety about her, for we have seen in many instances the unfortunate result of such a course. The experience of seventeen years confirms us in the belief that the other method is the best, and that by helping a mother to keep her child, rather than to resign the care of it, we are working in harmony with a wise Providence and not against it.

For the last few years we have had the assistance of Miss N. W. Covell, whose previous experience and practical knowledge of the life of working women have made her services of value to our work.

There are three people who give the larger part of their time to this object. The work of one of these (Miss Parkman) is especially connected with the hospital at 24 McLean St., while the other two, (Miss Clarke and Miss Covell) visit at the New England Hospital. The aid given is not, however, restricted to the patients in these hospitals, as often other cases are brought to our attention and are accepted.

We should be glad to give some account of many of



the women whom we assist, especially of the young girls, but have room for only a brief mention of a few cases:

1. First taken in charge in 1887. Irish-American. Then 17 years old, a gentle, but helpless and inefficient girl. Her health was at that time too feeble to make it possible for her to take the personal care of her infant. It was, therefore, placed at board. The young mother has visited her child regularly, paying almost the whole of its board out of her wages; has remained about two years in her present situation, has improved steadily in many ways, and is now a capable and valued domestic. We have never had any serious fault to find with her, but she has needed advice and assistance, that she might learn how to economize and make the best use of her money.

2. Irish-American. Taken in charge in December, 1888. Then 17 years old. We hesitated at first whether to assist this young girl. for her bold appearance and reckless manner made us fear that it would be labor thrown away. It has proved one of the most satisfactory cases that we ever helped. She has kept the entire personal care of her child, has lived for nearly two years in a lonely country place, where her work is heavy, and the improvement in her character and appearance is very striking. In letters received from her in the winter of 1890-91, she says:

"I am still in the same place; it isn't because I like it, for the work is awful hard. I was going to write to you last month, but I made an agreement that if they would give me \$3.00 a week I would stay this winter. There are eleven in the family beside the baby."

"I received your kind letter, and am ever and ever so much obliged to you for the papers. I find real good reading and information in them. Since I wrote that last letter to you I've changed my mind about leaving in the spring; now that I'm getting \$3.00 a week, I will stay and try and save up some money. \* \* \* The baby is 19 months old; but if you send the material for his dress I can make it just as well. I make all his clothes. \* \* \* It seems as though I never could pay you back for being so kind to me and baby, for I don't know what I would have done if it wasn't for you and Miss —; you have put me on the right road \* \* \* I have been thinking of buying a sewing machine; I see one advertised for \$18.00 and it looks like a good one."

3. Taken in 1888, 23 years old. Nova Scotia. This young woman has supported her child almost entirely, going out to work by the day, and having him with her in the same lodging, cared for by a friend during her absence. In the summer of 1890 the mother of the young woman took the child home to Nova Scotia.

4. Taken in the spring of 1889. Canadian, 27 years old. We found a situation for her with her infant where she has remained eighteen months, giving perfect satisfaction and supporting herself and her child entirely.

5. Taken in 1889. 22 years old, American. Has supported herself and her child entirely almost from the first. We received lately a letter from a friend of the family who employ her, saying: "I can state with full assurance that she has a most excellent reputation; she is good and faithful; her boy is large and healthy, and is the pride of his mother and of the family where she lives. A neater person I never saw."

6. Taken at the end of 1889. 16 years old, English. We advised the mother of this young girl to take her and the infant both home, which she was, at first, very reluctant to do. However, she consented, and the girl was therefore but a short time in our care. In December, 1890, we received a letter from the mother, containing the following passage: "My daughter, I am glad to say, is very well, and the little baby, now a year old, she has taken good care of. He is a nice healthy little fellow and we are very fond of him. I did try at first to get some one to adopt him, or put him in a 'Home.' A——'s downfall was indeed a bitter disappointment to us, so that we thought we could not bear the sight of the child, but since, I am very glad we kept him, for if I had given him to any one it would have been on my conscience always, and besides I think it is much better for A—— to have him here. I would like to have you talk with A—— a little. We will go to see you some Thursday afternoon after a little while."

7. Taken early in 1890. 18 years old, American. This young girl's parents were very angry with her for her fault and refused to receive her. We sent her with her infant to a family in a country town, where she has remained for about a year. She gives entire satisfaction and has a



comfortable, pleasant home. Her parents have now relented and have lately invited her to make them a visit.

MRS. JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE,  
MRS. W. C. WILLIAMSON,  
MARY R. PARKMAN,  
LILIAN FREEMAN CLARKE.

Subscriptions may be sent to MRS. JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE, Jamaica Plain, Mass., or to DR. C. P. PUTNAM, 63 Marlborough Street, Boston.

To prevent inconvenience, we add that the ladies who carry on this work are not able to see applicants at their houses. They will make an appointment in Boston when it is desirable to do so.

## MOTHERS ASSISTED DURING 1890.

Old Cases (continued from 1889),	49
New Cases (first taken in 1890),	155

Whole number assisted in 1890, 204

Married Women (new cases), 55

Unmarried Women (new cases), 100

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155

Married Women (old cases), 16

Unmarried Women (old cases), 33

## NATIONALITY OF OLD CASES.

(Married.)

American . . . . .	2
Irish . . . . .	2
Irish-American . . . . .	6
British Provinces . . . . .	1
English . . . . .	1
Colored . . . . .	2
Unknown . . . . .	2

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16

## NATIONALITY OF OLD CASES.

(Unmarried.)

American . . . . .	6
Irish . . . . .	8
Irish-American . . . . .	5
British Provinces . . . . .	6
English . . . . .	2
German . . . . .	1
German-American . . . . .	1
Colored . . . . .	1
Swedish . . . . .	1
Unknown . . . . .	2

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33

## NATIONALITY OF NEW CASES.

(Unmarried.)

Irish . . . . .	25
British Provinces . . . . .	26
American . . . . .	18
Irish American . . . . .	14
English . . . . .	4
German . . . . .	4
Swedish . . . . .	3
Colored . . . . .	3
Scotch . . . . .	1
Portuguese . . . . .	1
Norwegian . . . . .	1

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100

American . . . . .	18
Other Nationalities . . . . .	82

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100

## AGES OF NEW CASES.

(Unmarried.)

16 years old . . . . .	2
17 " " . . . . .	3
18 " " . . . . .	4
19 " " . . . . .	15
20 " " . . . . .	11
21 " " . . . . .	11
22 " " . . . . .	14
23 " " . . . . .	11
24 " " . . . . .	8
25 " " . . . . .	5
26 " " . . . . .	3
27 " " . . . . .	3
28 " " . . . . .	2
29 " " . . . . .	2
30 " " . . . . .	1
Over 30 . . . . .	2
Unknown . . . . .	3

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100

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Board of Infants . . . . .	361.70
Clothing of Women . . . . .	261.25
Clothing of Infants . . . . .	155.98
Milk and Food . . . . .	122.36
Fares and Traveling . . . . .	180.49
Advertising . . . . .	45.63
Medicine . . . . .	8.47
Rent . . . . .	18.00
Printing Report . . . . .	36.50
Sundries . . . . .	151.85
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	\$1,704.11
Salary of Miss Covell (gift of Mrs. W. B. Greene) . . . . .	450.00
Balance to New Account . . . . .	431.87
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	\$2,585.98

CR.

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Gift of Mrs. Mrs. W. B. Greene for salary of Miss Covell . . . . .	450.00
	<hr/>
	\$2,585.98